

Shadow Warriors Tactics - The art of guerrilla warfare

Advanced Tactics

By Archeonicus,
Edited by The Mordheimer.
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About the author:

Archeonicus is a living relic when it comes to gaming. Years of knowledge, experience and love for the game have made him a great Mordheim player. While he is the unofficial European Mordheim Champion, he still is a humble avid player. If you visit the Netherlands or play at the EuroGT, feel free to challenge him and take his title home! Many thanks for all his kind words and collaborations!

WebMaster's Note: In my humble opinion, elven warbands need to be revised. Their stats, while apparently seem to be at par with WHFB and their story lines, are way to high. While compared to mere humans, an average elf may be faster or more skill with the blade or bow, their stats are so high that there is little room to grow. Even among elven warbands their distinction between each other is minimal - for not saying not existing. One of the elven types must be faster than the others, or more skilled with the blade or bow. Differences like this are clearly stated among humans. Middenheimers are stronger; Reiklanders are more skilled at range combat; Marienburgers are plain average but have greater resources so they compensate with higher quality gear; Averlanders are scouts, etc. This overpowering warbands create great conflict on campaigns. Understanding that those who adventure in Mordheim are "wanna-be's", warriors who are starting on their path to glory, one could expect this races to also "mold" closer to average stats.

To balance their incredible stats (like hitting most opponents on 3+, only missing a climb on a natural 6, etc) the designers have reduced their maximum numbers, high jack each unit cost, among other things. While this creates a sense of fairness, on the long run it fails miserably... either crippling the warband terribly or allowing it to become god-like. Hopefully, this warbands would be re-designed in a near future for everyone's enjoyment.

My opinions have created very heated discussions in multiple forums. I do like elven warbands, but they do not seemed quite finished (unlike the Dwarves, who are quite balanced) and someone should attempt to re-design them. Seeing that the Shadow Warriors had been removed from the Official List by Games Workshop, it seemed clear to me that I'm up to something. Please email  emailyou comments... we want to hear from you!

I. Characters: Knowing the Gang

Shadow Master A necessity. Very expensive at 70 GC but worth it with WS and BS 5, Ld 9, the leader skill and a lovely starting selection of skills. Try to keep him alive, but do not be afraid to get stuck in with him. Avoid close combat monsters like the plague. His best role is towards the back of the warband and in the middle, using his superior leadership to keep them fighting.

Shadow Walkers You can have three of these, and I recommend all three. Admittedly, they cost 10GC more than an ordinary Shadow Warrior, but I think that

being a hero and it entails is worth it. Call that extra point of weapon-skill a bonus- it gives you a skilled warrior to attack the enemy with that is not your leader. These should be handling the enemy in close combat - you do not have any better warriors in your warband, and they are cheap enough for it not be a major catastrophe when they die.

Shadow Weaver

See above, but you can only get one. This time, the bonus is powerful magic. It is little terrain based, but powerful, easy to cast and with access to some snazzy items. Logically, he should be kept out of combat where possible, but he is still a good enough warrior in case things go wrong. Plan your spells in advance, and keep your eye on the terrain. Most of his spells are defensive in nature, so a spellbook to access lesser magic is needed if you want a walking cannon type mage. Since he has magic to use, a bow is unnecessary for him at first.

Shadow Warriors

The backbone of the warband. They have superlative stats, can be taken in any numbers and are relatively cheap (at least for this warband!) They should be taken in numbers with swords and bows as good starting equipment. These should be used where possible and should be the ones in the dirty situations unless you have <spits> novices </spits>. If promoted, you have several options... Combat Masters (take any two from combat, speed and strength [a.k.a. special] skills) to hit enemies, Shooting Lords (take Shooting and Speed skills) to shoot enemies or Support (take Academic skills) who helps getting rare stuff easily and cheaply, as well as one day learning magic (satisfying the other two with the right spells)

Shadow Novices

Cheap! Stats better than a human and at the same price. For an elf however, they have bad stats, so only take them to bulk out the warband at the start and then sack them- if you use them. Personally, I would rather take an unequipped warrior to be equipped soon than one of these with a bow.

*WARNING! * These things are as beardy as hell. Do not use them.

*WARNING! *

II. Starting Tips:

So how would you begin with a warband, what is important to look at when you start?

1. If possible buy as much heroes as possible! They are the guys that actually bring in the money, after a battle. The money... I cannot stress that enough! In one-time-only games that fact does not matter, so then there is more room for experimenting.

III. Warband Types:

So now you know something about the characters and about important starter points. Now let's get to the warband designing. Of course there are a lot of options, but often they come down to the following three types of warbands.

A. *The "fluff" warband*

The warband which has a lot of goodies such as Repeating Crossbows and Dark Elf Blades. With starting 500 gc, you can have the following goodies (no pun intended) warband:

- 1 Shadow Master with Sword, Bow
- 3 Shadow Walker with Sword, Bow
- 1 Shadow Weaver with Bow
- 1 Shadow Warriors with Bow
- 3 Shadow Warriors with dagger

Now with this warband you'll be looking to replace casualties after the first game, followed by supplying swords and bows throughout your warband. After that, casualties aside, you should be looking to replace bows with longbows, give spears out as secondary weapons, and perhaps get a couple of double handed weapons, along with the usual miscellaneous goods - lucky charms, holy relics, hunting arrows and your lovely special items are all good. After more games, you should be looking to be at full size and have some Hired Swords.

Pro: Since almost all of your warriors have BS 4 from the beginning, you will be dead good at shooting. With M 5 and I 6, you will be able to shift it very quickly round the board and get into almost anywhere. With WS 4 and I 6, you are actually quite good in combat; you'll be hitting first and hitting easier most of the time. Lots and lots of lovely 'Elf only' items, plus a special skill list and you do have access to all skill tables too.

Con: Small equipment choices. You have no access to poisons or drugs, and your starting equipment lists are very small and generally very expensive. High cost warriors; at 35 gc for the average henchelf you will not get large amounts of warriors starting. Only average strength and toughness; with a delayed access to strength skills, not much armor and little strength raising weapons for extras.

Strategy: With these points, the best idea is a flexible force running rings around the enemy. However, do not be fooled by the high BS. You want to be engaging the enemy in combat. You should be able to charge when you want, you have a high WS that allows you to hit easily. By all means sit back and put a couple of arrows into those disgusting close combat monsters you don't want to see but you should be aiming to see combat.

IV. Shadow Warrior Magic:

1. Pool of Shadow:
2. The Living Shadows:
3. Wings of Night:
4. Cloak of Darkness:
5. Shadowbind:
6. Shield of Shadow:

V. Advancing:

More Tactics

By Tseench,
Edited by The Mordheimer.

When it comes to Shadow Warrior tactics I think it might be useful to make the advantages of their heightened senses, high movement and high initiative more prominent. A Shadow Warrior warband will most often be outnumbered. At startup because of their relative expensive units, and later on because of their relatively small maximum warband size. Because of this they need to "soften up" the enemy before actual hand to hand combat begins. For instance with "guerilla-like-sniper" tactics. Because of their heightened senses, high movement and high initiative they are the best warband to succeed in this.

To maximize on this advantage, I often give them lanterns after the first or second game (depending on the costs absorbed by replacements), this way they can spot hidden enemies up to 16". This gives them AT LEAST two effective rounds of shooting before close combat begins, and three if you are smart enough to get to higher ground with most of your warriors. Which often is enough to take two or three units out of action.

Taking them to higher ground not only often gives them an extra round of shooting, it might also enable them to make diving charges against the enemy warband. Because of their high WS they will hit most starting warriors on 3+, with a successful diving charge this will become a 2+! The +1 strength bonus is also very useful for Shadow Warriors. So it pays to scan the battle table for strategic sniper/diving positions. Good positions are those with room for multiple elevated warriors (your warriors are too fragile to handle an isolated situation), diving charge potential and preferably with room for supporting ground troops. But be careful with too much "diving activity" in the first battle, with initiative 6 they still have a 17% chance of failing their test, with T3 a serious risk when done with your entire warband! Therefore it is really helpful to buy rope and hook for all your heroes after the first game. For only 5 gc/hero this is the best investment you can do, since the chances of failing an initiative test for an Elf with rope & hook are less than 3%! (Check the math if you don't believe me.)

I think these tactics might be a helpful addition for most Shadow Warrior players. They worked for me and I've fought 20-30 battles with them, one tie, lost none. Which is not a means of saying that Shadow Warriors are too broken to be played with, especially in the beginning of the campaign. It is a difficult warband to play with because of their low starting number. If you don't succeed in limiting your casualties during the first few battles you will have a hard time with them. They start as a moderate warband, they will become good after 5-10 battles, and after 20+ battles they can become one of the strongest warbands around (just after Possessed with 50+ Possessed/Beastman monsters.)